THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Various organisations namely All India Trade Union Congress, All India Port & Dock Workers Federation, India Centre for Human Rights & Law, Green Peace and Corp Watch including Centre of Indian Trade Unions have written to the Ministry of Environment & Forests, drawing the attention of the inflow of steel scrap from the debris of the World Trade Centre (WTC), New York into India. An officer from Ministry of Environment & Forests was deputed to Chennai to investigate the matter. It has been reported that about 33,000 tonnes of steel scrap from World Trade Centre (WTC) wreckage and other sources in the United States have been shipped to Chennai Port. The Ministry also held inter-ministerial consultations on this issue.

Steel scrap is not a hazardous waste as per the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989 and amendments 2000. Steel Scrap also is not categorised as hazardous waste in the Basel Convention on the Control of Transbounday Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. Steel scrap, being a free commodity under EXIM Policy, is routinely imported into the country for recovery of steel.

The chemical analysis report of M/s. SGS India (Pvt.) Ltd. has shown that the imported steel scrap does not contain hazardous constituents up to detectable limits.

Malpractices in NOS Examinations

*129. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been widespread criticism of the conduct of examinations under the National Open School system;

(b) if so, the malpractices reported during the last two years; and

(c) the action taken to conduct examinations under the National Open School system, more seriously?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (c) The National Open School has been vested with the

authority to conduct Examinations at Secondary and Senior Secondary level and certify students appearing in them. NOS has informed Government that during the examinations held in ApriK May, 2000 and AprilMay 2001, NOS received reports regarding cases of mass copying in some Examination Centres as per details given below:—

	No. of candidates appeared	No. of Examination Centres	No. of candidates involved in the cases of mass-copying	No. Of Examination Centres involved in mass-copying
Exams held in AprilMay 2000				
Secondary Exam	98948	522	1894	37
Sr. Sec. Exam	71453		8312	
Exams held in ApriHviay 2001				
Secondary Exam	122101	621	2355	39
Sr. Sec. Exam	93175		3649	

The following specific steps have been taken by the NOS during the past two years to eradicate mass-copying and other malpractices in the examination conducted by it:—

(i) Only the accredited institutions of NOS are now fixed as Examination Centres as far as possible, because accredited institutions are accountable to NOS and are also well versed with NOS system.

(ii) After the examinations are over, the Centre Superintendents are directed to despatch Answer Books to the NOS by the same evening.

(iii) Provision of scanned photographs of all the candidates to the Examination Centre to check impersonation.

(iv) Appointment of Team of ObserversWodal Officer to oversee fair conduct of Exams.

(v) Appointment of External examiners in addition to the internal examiners for the conduct of practical examinations.

(vi) Introduction of the concept of fictitious Roll Numbers for secret evaluation at different evaluation centres from October, 2001 Exams.

(vii) Accreditation of 26 accredited institutions of NOS which were involved in malpractices during the conduct of AprIK May, 2000 Exam was withdrawn. Eleven other Examination Centres (Non AIs) were also blacklisted.

As a result of improvement measures initiated by the NOS, the total number of candidates involved in mass-copying has come down from about 6% (10206 out of 170401) in AprilMay, 2000 examinations to 2.78% (6004 out of 215276) in AprikMay, 2001 examinations.

Modern telescope In Laddakh

*130. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are thinking of setting-up of the world's most modern telescope in Laddakh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether approval of the Planning Commission had been sought for this purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The Indian Institute of Astrophysics is planning to set up a state-of-the-art large infrared optical telescope in Hanle, Ladakh, which is world's highest observatory for optical and infrared